



## *News Release*

**For Immediate Release:**

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### *Grazing goats in San José are not kidding around*

Several hundred goats have returned to San José to cement their role as “pest management specialists.” This time they brought friends—several hundred sheep to help graze City properties, including Alum Rock Park and several sites in the Evergreen area. These amazing grazers can consume difficult to manage weeds including thistle without the use of a single ounce of herbicide. The goats and sheep will be on-site 24/7 under the supervision of a goatherd.

This is the second year the City of San José is using grazing animals, bats and barn owls to achieve a sustainable, less-toxic land management system. Using natural pest management methods helps to protect local streams and the Bay by reducing the City’s use of pesticides. Grazing also encourages native species growth by suppressing weedy non-natives and reduces risk for wildfire. The sheep used are Dorper sheep. Several types of goats are used, including Boer, Kiko and Spanish goats. The animals are supplied through a contract with Living Systems Land Management, LLC, based in San Francisco.

“Grazing goats and sheep are a great, natural alternative to pesticides,” said Matt Weber, of the City’s Environmental Services Department. “Anything we can do to keep pesticides from polluting our local creeks and the San Francisco Bay will help to keep San José a sustainable community.”

Grazing at San Jose Municipal Water Zone 3 Reservoir began last week. It’s especially important to replace pesticides with grazing at this site to protect water quality.

Everything that flows into the City’s 2,200-mile-long storm sewer system flows untreated into local creeks and the southern portion of the San Francisco Bay, including

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pesticides. Pesticides can adversely affect water quality, disrupt fragile ecosystems, and be toxic to aquatic life. Reducing the use of pesticides helps keep local creeks and the Bay healthy. For more information about pesticides and stormwater, visit the City of San Jose' stormwater web page at: [www.sanjoseca.gov/esd/stormwater](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/esd/stormwater).

### Bats and Barn Owls

Other “pest-management specialists” being encouraged to join the City this summer are local bats and barn owls. To entice bats to perform their natural predation on mosquitoes and gnats in targeted areas, the City and community gardeners mounted long-lasting, maintenance-free bat boxes on posts at ten community gardens including Jessie Frey, La Colina, Coyote Creek, Nuestra Tierra, Mayfair, Laguna Seca, Latimer, and Calabazas. In addition, educational signage is being added at each location to help explain the use of bats as a biological control for pests. There are 14 species of bats indigenous to Santa Clara County and they normally roost in caves, trees, twig piles, buildings, and bridges. They are one of nature’s most effective pest controllers with some species able to eat up to 1,200 mosquitoes an hour.

Barn owls hunt gophers and mice. To minimize potential damage to irrigation lines by burrowing gophers as well as prevent uneven footing in City parks, 30 owl boxes have been installed in parks throughout the City, including at Alum Rock, Berryessa, Noble, Penitencia, Santana Wallenberg, Guadalupe Oak Grove, Groesbeck, Meadowfair, Silver Creek Linear, Evergreen, Kelly, Almaden Lake, Basking Ridge, Edenvale, George Page, and Lake Cunningham parks and Laguna Seca Community Garden. Educational signage is being added to several sites to help explain the use of barn owls as a biological control for pests. Owls can lower gopher populations and then maintain them at an acceptable level. Predation by owls will lessen the need for City staff to expend resources on traditional gopher controls (baiting, trapping, and fumigating).

### Directions to grazing sites

Animals grazing at Alum Rock Park can be seen at the following sites:

- 12 acres near Boulder Drive;

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- 3 acres near park parking lot; and
- 6 acres off Carothers Road.

These sites in the Evergreen are accessible and good for public viewing:

- 4½ acres immediately across Running Springs Road from Early Morning Lane;
- 8 acres on east side of Running Springs Road, north of Hawkcrest Circle; and
- 3 acres north east of Running Springs Road south west of Grand Oak Way.

The Municipal Water Sites are gated, not accessible, and not good for public viewing.

**The Environmental Services Department** is committed to encouraging sustainability while providing an array of environmental services. It administers four utilities including the Municipal Water System, the San Jose/Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant, South Bay Water Recycling, and Recycle Plus (residential solid waste management). It also oversees Watershed Protection, which monitors water quality at local industries as well as in creeks and streams, and the Office of Sustainability.

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